



Atlanta Church of Christ ⁱⁿ Gwinnett

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The birds of the air come and perch in its branches.

- Matthew 13:32

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Happy 2020!



We hope the new year has gotten off to a great start for everyone, but whether it's been rocky or rosy so far, God has new mercies in store for us every day (Lamentations 3:22-23). Day by day, 2020 can be the start of all kinds of new growth—here's looking forward to all the new year has in store!

Getting moving to help orphans in Africa!

Our appreciation to everyone who let their lights shine in helping a whole generation of orphans in Africa, whether walking, fundraising, or contributing! Sherry Rouse helped organize the women's portion of this fall's HOPE *worldwide* Superheroes 4 Africa program in our congregation; she got small groups of women together in November and early December to walk and to raise funds—the last newsletter included a couple of pictures, but here's one more, from December 2nd.



Then on the first weekend in November, the Rouses and the Cottons (Alan and Sherry's son-in-law, daughter, and grandchildren) walked up to the Indian Seats at Sawnee Mountain Preserve to participate as a family. Fundraising for a really good cause, family time, healthy exercise, enjoying nature's beauty, and modeling compassion and generosity for the next two generations—who could ask for a better experience? Here are some pix that show what the day was like—



With thanks to Sherry Rouse for pictures & info!



The Downside of the Holiday Season

Now that the holiday season is drawing to a close, I am reflecting on how it affected my relationship with God and realizing that I used my time off and my time with family and friends as an excuse to mostly ignore Him. Sure, there was prayer time here and there, and occasional prayers throughout the day, but getting into the Word and spending time getting to know Him better through it—that I mostly supplanted with other activities. My normal morning routine of getting up early, spending time in prayer and then reflecting on God’s word basically turned into sleeping in, lounging around and filling my life with other activities. I wonder if some of you would say the same.

As I pondered this further, I considered the year past, and I can honestly say that I was spiritually stagnant. This was a wake-up call for me. I thought back over Steve’s sermon on Sunday, January 5th – “Imagine a Life without Growth.” Steve pointed us to the words of Jesus in John 12:24-25: “...unless a grain of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains just a grain of wheat; but if it dies, it produces much fruit.” He asked us to think about this verse in terms of dormant potential versus life, or in terms of our selfish desires versus God’s desire for our lives. As I reflected on his words and the words of our Lord, I realized that I have definitely been living more for my own selfish desires than for God’s desire for my life. There are habits that I have allowed to creep back in that I need to die to, so that God can be glorified in who I am and how I live. It is time to get back to the basics.

How do I get back to basics? Well, again the answer lies in the words of our Lord. As Steve relayed in his sermon, bearing fruit is not the destination but the result of our ongoing sanctification. Change is a process, not a one-time event, and it starts with being in God’s word. I meditated upon these truths and found that for much of the last year, I had consumed God’s word through sermons and not through my own reading and studies. If I am going to change, I need to start by getting back into God’s word for myself, apart from the interpretations of others. I’m not saying that there are no good insights to be gained by listening to various teachers, or that what I have consumed over the last year has not helped me, but I recognize that I need to pursue my own studies of God’s word.

This year, I am committing myself to my spiritual growth. I know that spending time studying God’s word will bring about the change He desires in my life, and I welcome it. If this spoke to you, then I hope you will join me on your own journey back to basics.

– Alex Neumann

Breaking bread, giving thanks

On November 20th, three family groups combined for a Thanksgiving celebration at Mary Hall's house—



—and on November 24th, the Latino ministry, family and friends met at the Medranos' house for their celebration. Take a look—



With thanks to Sherry Rouse, Zack Matovu & Nancy Berry for pictures & info!



A musical “gift” for the season!

Our thanks once again to all the talented performers and everyone who contributed onstage and behind the scenes to make this year’s Christmas program, “The Gift,” such an outstanding occasion for the audience full of disciples, friends and family! Here are a few scenes from that morning—







“

We will open
the book. Its pages are
blank. We are
going to put words on
them ourselves.
The book is called
Opportunity and its
first chapter is
New Year's Day.

We welcome news and pictures on interesting personal stories, family group activities, and more. Please send them to Nancy Berry, nberry2@gmail.com. Thank you!

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